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ABSTRACT

This paper describes an emerging model for a comprehensive staff and organizational development program as a continuous and integral activity of the college, and discusses the role of the office of institutional research in such programs. A comprehensive program includes instructional development (instructional evaluation, diagnosis, microteaching, methodology/technology, curriculum development), organizational development (departmental decision-making and conflict management, team building, management building), and personal development (life planning workshops, interpersonal skills training, personal growth workshops, supportive and therapeutic counseling) for all college staff. The institutional research office may be integrated into the total process by serving as a key resource for assessing staff development needs, establishing program goals, and evaluating goal attainment. Data gathered and analyzed by the office of institutional research can be channeled into program planning and modification through continuing feedback. If staff development is to become a vital instrument in human resource development and utilization, planning for such programs must be an integral part of overall institutional planning. (JDS)

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COMPREHENSIVE STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING

by Charles S. Claxton

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Title: Comprehensive Staff Development in the Community College: Implications for the Office of Institutional Research and Planning

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ABSTRACT

An increasing number of two-year colleges are drawing upon an emerging model of comprehensive staff development. The model includes not only instructional improvement but organizational and personal development as well. In this model, staff development becomes an integral part of the college and, as such, the planning of such a program should be an essential part of institutional planning.

The Office of Institutional Research and Planning should serve as a major resource in the formulation of the staff program. Three major areas where this can occur are discussed: setting goals for the program, assessing staff development needs, and evaluating the impact of the program.

Staff development, or the process of helping staff members improve their competencies in their work, is certainly nothing new. In fact, colleges and universities have been involved for years in various staff development activities, such as the fall faculty workshop, travel, sabbaticals and professional reading. But with few exceptions, staff development has generally been somewhat of a peripheral concern. In recent times however, particularly in the two year colleges, it has begun to move to the forefront as a central activity of the institution.

This new emphasis has come about for several reasons. One of the most important is that faculty mobility, so long a characteristic of higher education, has now diminished substantially. Cartter (1976, p. 161) has noted that the number of faculty members making job changes from one institution to another dropped 60 percent between 1968 and 1976. Thus, colleges can no longer count on the influx of new staff members for infusions of new strengths and new ideas. It appears that, for the most part, the faculty and staff that are on board today in the two year colleges are the ones who will be manning the institutions for the foreseeable future. Hence, new talents and strengths needed to meet the changing demands of college students will have to be developed within the present staff. An effective staff development program can help facilitate this process.

An extremely important concern in the planning and implementation of an effective staff development program -- and one that has received very little attention thus far -- is the role of the office of institu-

tional research and planning.

In the following discussion the author will, first, describe an emerging model of comprehensive staff development in the community college, and second, suggest some of the major implications key aspects of this model have for the office of institutional research and planning.

An Emerging Model of Comprehensive Staff Development

With the new emphasis on staff development, it takes on several characteristics which add up to a rather dramatic departure from traditional approaches.

1. In the past staff development has been an ancillary activity, apart from the "real" work of the college. But in the new approach it is seen as a way to facilitate continued renewal of the institution and the staff. As such, it is a central activity of the college, inextricably related to its mission, operation and institutional planning.
2. Staff development has been episodic in nature and often consisted of such activities as workshops at the beginning of the semester, an occasional sabbatical and faculty attendance at national or state conferences. In the new approach, staff development is a continuous, planned program which goes on throughout the year.
3. Staff development has frequently been those activities identified by the administrative leadership. But it is seen increasingly as a program in which there is broad based participation in planning and carrying out the program. The design of the program is not something brought in from the outside or devised by someone else. Rather, the program is based upon the needs identified by the staff members themselves.

4. In the past the term "development" has had a connotation of correcting deficiencies. But, based upon the principle that all people continue to grow and change, a staff development program is increasingly viewed as postive and growth oriented.
5. Staff development has traditionally been for faculty only. But the American Association of Community and Junior Collges, leading writers and consultants in the field and an increasing number of colleges see it as being for all persons on the staff: faculty, administrators, student services staff and support personnel including secretaries, security officers and custodians.

This different emphasis on staff development is seen further in models outlined by several leading writers, and the focus is not just on instructional development but on other key aspects of development as well.

In a model outlined by Gaff (1975), there are three approaches or components of staff development: faculty development, instructional development, and organizational development.

In faculty development, according to Gaff, the focus is on the faculty members themselves, and ways are provided that facilitate development in their professional and personal lives. Activities are designed to help members learn new skills and knowledge relating to the teaching function.

Instructional development focuses on the curriculum and ways to improve student learning through the re-designing of curriculum and the preparation of more effective learning materials.

Organizational development focuses on the structure and the environment (or climate) of the institution itself and seeks ways to create a more effective setting in which development can occur.

Bergquist and Phillips (1975) have presented a similar model of staff development which includes instructional development, organizational development and personal development.

In this model, instructional development includes:

1. Instructional evaluation (including self-evaluation, peer evaluation, and student evaluation)
2. Instructional diagnosis (including contracting, data collection and data feedback)
3. Microteaching
4. Educational methodology and technology
5. Curricular development

Organizational development includes:

1. Departmental decision-making and conflict management
2. Departmental team building
3. Management building

Personal development includes:

1. Faculty interviews
2. Life planning workshops
3. Interpersonal skill training
4. Personal growth workshops
5. Supportive and therapeutic counseling

Staff members are generally familiar with instructional development, and this needs no further elaboration here. There is less understanding, however, of organizational and personal development.

Organizational development is a much discussed topic in business and industry and was highlighted in a classic paper, "Breakthrough in Organizational Development" in the HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW (Blake, et al., 1964).

The essential point of organizational development is that the development of individuals and programs within an organization cannot really be successful unless the organization itself is also developing. If this does not occur, the development of individual members of the staff cannot occur because there is no receptivity to change in the environment.

Development generally means change; only where change is accepted and encouraged can staff development be meaningful. Hence, in planning for college staff development, adequate attention must be given to the atmosphere and structure of the organization.

Personal development is based upon the premise that what a person does as a teacher or administrator, or whatever, depends essentially on "where he is as a person." Humanistic psychologists such as Carl Rogers and others state that a person is continually evolving or "becoming" a person. This process can be facilitated by an appropriate organizational environment and activities which contribute to the individual's growth as a person. In turn, the college gains because people develop in their jobs as they develop as persons.

Because people are not used to thinking of staff development as a means of personal development, they may need assistance in identifying personal goals and objectives. It is helpful if staff members are encouraged to go through a process of introspection and reflection upon their personal lives, their careers, and their personal goals in life. Such a process can be facilitated by having staff members become familiar with significant research by Levineson (1974) and others, which points up that all adults go through several stages of development, filled with challenge, crisis, and renewal. Sensitivity to these development stages helps staff development planners to see that staff members, because they are at different points in their develop-

ment, will want different things from a staff development program. New faculty members will probably need help in developing approaches to instruction. Their more experienced colleagues may wish to develop skills to deal with specific problem areas.

Of course, the three components of development -- instructional, organizational and personal -- are not nearly so discrete as might be inferred from the two models described here. Many activities in instructional development, for example, will contain elements of the other two. The emphasis on any one component will vary with the needs of the institution at any given time.

Most institutions, no doubt, will concentrate most of their attention and resources in the instructional area, and this is entirely appropriate. Nevertheless, those who plan and implement the program need to be familiar with all three components. Concentration on any one component, to the exclusion of the others, will inhibit substantially the impact the program has on the institution.

The approach to staff development described here is an exciting undertaking, and reports in the literature and from the field indicate that a number of colleges are committed to the concept of staff development as a comprehensive, continuous and fully planned activity. The program at Miami-Dade Community College, for example, is widely hailed, and there are creative programs at other two year colleges, such as Catonsville Community College (Maryland), Southeastern Community College (North Carolina), Delgado College (Louisiana) and elsewhere. In a recent Southern Regional Education Board project on staff development, in which this author participated, we found a deep interest at many colleges in formulating such programs.

As more and more colleges are moving to this kind of approach, what are the implications for the Office of Institutional Research and Planning (OIRP)?

First, the staff development program needs to be responsive to the professional development needs of the people who are institutional researchers and planners. They need to give some thought to what they want from a staff development program and then work to ensure that it is responsive to their interests. Examples of staff development activities might include:

-- Further training to establish or refine a comprehensive management information system for the institution;

-- Increased knowledge to strengthen the interface the OIRP has with the educational program;

-- Additional graduate courses or participation in a summer institute which will focus on techniques in long-range planning.

The second way the new emphasis on staff development has implications for the OIRP -- and one which warrants extended discussion here -- is the role of that office as a resource in planning and implementation of staff development. It may well be that the OIRP is the single most important resource in the college for the staff development program.

There are three major areas where the OIRP can serve as a key resource:

1. Needs assessment
2. Goal setting
3. Evaluation

Needs Assessment

In the past staff development activities often have been based on the ideas of the administrative leadership, perhaps with input from a faculty committee. But in this model the program design flows from a systematic analysis of the developmental needs of staff in the institution. The OIRP,

because of its expertise in instrument design, and because of its involvement in research and planning, needs to serve as a major resource to the staff development planners in the needs assessment process.

A frequently used tool in assessing needs is a survey instrument, e.g., a written questionnaire. Such an instrument could include a listing of possible needs people might have as well as formats and activities that could be carried out to meet the needs. The OIRP could play a major role in the design of an appropriate instrument, tabulation of the data and analysis of the findings.

Survey instruments, such as questionnaires, are a useful and practical tool. But given this model of comprehensive staff development, identifying needs is more involved than simply relying on rather routine questionnaires which identify instructional development needs only.

For example, a need which falls into the category of organizational development and which may well become critical in the next several years is the need for some kind of continuing organizational renewal. Heretofore, this has probably not been a problem in most community colleges. A huge proportion of these institutions are products of the 1960's, those halcyon days of rapid expansion and burgeoning enrollments. Institutions which were experiencing such rapid change and growth probably had few problems of inertia or stagnation.

But researchers in organizational development tell us that organizations, like people, go through rather distinct stages of development and change. What frequently happens is that when organizations are new, the personnel tend to be innovative and change-oriented. Then as the years go by and expansion tapers off, the organization seems to "peak"; personnel become tired and develop an interest in maintaining the status quo, rather than the

constant (and tiring) pattern of change. Richardson (1975) has termed this the "seven-year cycle of hope to despair."

Greiner (1972) has identified five fairly distinct stages -- and crises -- that organizations go through and suggests that if the leadership and staff are at least aware of these stages, they can deal more effectively with them.

John Gardner (1965), drawing on the ideas expressed in his books, Excellence and Self-Renewal, has noted that organizations need some kind of built-in mechanism which will foster continual development or renewal.

Such findings have particular relevance for community colleges. Now that the days of rapid growth are over, there is a need to learn how to maintain organizational vigor and renewal in a time of slow growth or, in some cases, decline.

Attention to the organizational development needs of the institution is one possible way to deal with this problem. But how does one go about identifying needs related to such areas as institutional structure, climate and patterns of decision-making? This will call for sensitivity and insight on the part of institutional researchers as well as the design of instruments and procedures which are far more esoteric and innovative than routine questionnaires.

No doubt a few colleges have begun work in this area, but the majority have not. It is a virtually uncharted area where there exist far more questions than answers. But because the developmental needs here are (and will be) particularly critical, and because the OIRP has greater expertise and sensitivity to the problems than most other people in the college, it can play an especially important role in helping identify the organizational development needs.

The OIRP can also play a significant role in assessing staff development needs by ensuring that the information and concerns it identifies in its research and planning operation are made a part of the staff development needs analysis. Examples would include:

1. Enrollment data
   - -- What are the numbers of students projected for next year? In two years? In ten years?
   - -- What are the ages, sex and educational preparations of the students the college will serve in the years ahead?
   - -- What will be the curricular interests of students?
2. Staffing patterns
   - -- How many staff persons will be required in the years ahead to serve the educational needs of the student body?
   - -- At what levels and in what roles will they work? For example, with the increasing societal emphases on colleges to certify competence, rather than simply award credit hours and degrees, perhaps a portion of the faculty will be primarily involved in that kind of work in the future.
   - -- What are the kinds of strengths and qualifications that will be needed in the staff? How much of that will have to be developed within the present staff through the staff development program, rather than through recruitment of new staff?
   - -- If decreasing enrollment is projected in certain academic programs, are there opportunities for faculty to gain new skills and knowledge through staff development and to have mobility within the institution to meet new staffing needs as well as their own employment needs?

3. Budget projections

-- What will be the level of funding in the years ahead for salaries, academic programs and, especially, for staff development? For example, how much money will there be for activities, such as sabbaticals, mini-grants, travel, etc?

Such information can all become part of the assessment of needs and other planning for the staff development program. For example, if it is seen that certain new skills will be needed five years from now and that those skills need to be developed within the present staff, then the staff development program can become a primary vehicle for helping develop the necessary talents.

Thus, the OIRP can play a significant role in the assessment of staff development needs: (1) by feeding in the findings and information it has compiled and analyzed through its regular operation; (2) in the design of instruments, some of which will need to be particularly innovative; and (3) in collecting, tabulating and analyzing information on staff needs. It will need to refine and streamline the process of gathering and analyzing data so as to make the task manageable and efficient. Further, because the planning and implementation of staff development is a continuing process which goes on year after year, a procedure needs to be established whereby needs assessment can be done regularly as the staff development program continues.

Goal Setting

The process of setting goals is extremely important and to omit it is like starting a trip with no clear destination or little idea of how to get there. But it can be a rather difficult problem, with the concerns ranging from semantics to basic issues of program purpose. Further, goals often seem rather elusive and abstract, and many people feel more comfortable con-

centrating their attention in areas that are more concrete and practical. Perhaps for that reason, many staff development planners want to omit the goal setting process and, instead, want to "rush in" and begin to conduct activities in staff development. But, actually, that should come later, at its proper time. The process of identifying the goals of the staff development program should be one of the first steps the staff development planners carry out as they begin outlining the upcoming year's activities. The OIRP, because of its expertise and familiarity with the process of goal setting, can play a facilitative, or consultant, role in helping the planners set goals for the staff development program.

To be effective and meaningful, the goals of the staff development program should be derived from, and be somewhat of a distillation of, the analysis of needs in the institution, discussed above, and the goals at the various levels of the college:

-- the institutional level

-- the unit level (e.g., division, department)

-- the individual level

The goals of the institution, hopefully, are already well delineated and have been arrived at thoughtfully. The planners of staff development need to study these goals and major concerns of the institution and ensure that these are reflected in the staff development goals they set for themselves. For example, if the institution has committed itself to serving groups in the community it has not yet reached (e.g., inner city adults who need to learn basic writing skills), this points up the need for persons on the staff who have the necessary talent and knowledge to serve that group. If that talent and knowledge are not yet available on the staff, that has implication for the staff development program.

Next, the persons responsible for the various units need to reflect upon what the units' goals are for the coming year. Perhaps the general education division wishes to individualize its entry level courses; perhaps the electronics program wants to make its program entirely competency based with assessment of competency done by juries made up of faculty and industry representatives. If the present staff does not have the skills needed to make such changes, this has immediate implication for the staff development program.

As units are setting goals, individuals in divisions and departments need to establish their own goals for the coming year. A good discussion of this process appears in a journal article, "Contracting for Professional Development in Academe" (Buhl and Greenfield, 1975). The article describes a situation where a division director and a faculty member sit down together to discuss the teacher's goals for the coming year. The goals the teacher identifies include doing more work on performance evaluation of students. The division head states that more adequate evaluation is a concern of the division and the institution as well, and he tells the instructor that provisions can be made to help him reach his goals in this area.

Once goals have been set at the various levels, the staff development planners can then go through a goal setting process for the staff development program for the coming year. The OIRP staff, in the role of resource persons or consultants, assist the staff development planners in this process.

Evaluation

There are three areas where the OIRP needs to play a significant role in evaluation as it relates to the staff development program. First, there needs to be on-going evaluation of the various development activities which are provided for members of the staff. A frequently used procedure here is

to have participants and, perhaps, observers evaluate whether the activity was of value to them and to make suggestions for future activities. Involvement of the OIRP in this kind of evaluation is an important concern because, given this comprehensive model of staff development, activities are continuous, not just one or two a year. Hence, there is a need for the design of evaluation instruments which can be tabulated and analyzed efficiently. If this part of evaluation is not manageable, the process becomes burdensome and of little use.

Second, there needs to be evaluation of the extent to which goals have been met -- the goals of the various levels discussed before and of the staff development program itself. Instruments need to be designed and used which can be helpful in gathering information to assess whether goals have been attained.

Third, ways need to be devised whereby the information and data gathered in the two processes described above can become part of the continuing feedback and refinement of the staff development planning.

Finally, the staff development committee needs to establish a regularized process such that each year goals are reviewed, needs are identified, activities are sponsored, program effectiveness is assessed, results are fed back into the planning and modifications of the plan are made as needed. Then the cycle may continue year after year, with improved programs built upon the experiences of the past. The extent to which the staff development program is successful depends to no small extent on whether the OIRP is fully involved in this process, especially in the areas of needs assessment, goal setting, and evaluation.

Constraints

Does this kind of extensive interaction between staff development planners and the OIRP described in this discussion take place? Some impressionistic findings indicate that it often does not, and there are two major reasons for this.

First, the personnel of the OIRP seem to be forced to spend a great deal of their time "putting out brush fires," responding to the immediate demands of the president, the board of control, and others. Perhaps with the increasing emphasis on long range institutional planning, this situation will become less acute.

But the more important reason is that staff development itself is not, generally, a well planned process. It tends to be episodic in nature and highly fragmented in terms of money and effort expended. In the model described here, however, staff development is seen as a vital instrument in planning for human resource development and utilization. As such, planning for staff development, of necessity, becomes an integral part of institutional planning.

If staff development does become a key part of institutional planning, as this author believes it should, then it can be effective only if the OIRP is able to bring its considerable expertise and resources to bear in the planning process.

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